

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 2 (January 8-14, 2017)

Last week we saw how God fulfilled His promise by bringing the Jews back into the land of Israel. What's next for His chosen people? Great question! We will explore the answer this week.

Sunday, January 8 (read Ezekiel 36:33-38)

“Then the nations around you will know that I the Lord have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate.” (Ezekiel 36:36a)

The book of Ezekiel contains the words, “Then they will know” throughout the texts. God’s purpose in everything is to bring people to Him! In today’s reading, His Word explains how He will accomplish this goal. He will resettle the desolate towns and plant gardens in the barren fields (v. 33-35). Today, the nations around Israel can’t help but notice what God has done for His chosen people and for their land. Even though these nations will continue their longstanding hatred for God’s chosen people, someday they will acknowledge that the Jews have a powerful force behind them. The Israelites will multiply just like they did in Egypt where they were slaves (v. 37). Best of all, they will finally realize that God is the Lord of the entire universe (v. 38).

Monday, January 9 (read Ezekiel 37:1-6)

Then He said to me, “Prophesy to these bones and say to them, ‘Dry bones, hear the Word of the Lord!’ “ (Ezekiel 37:4)

The Spirit leads Ezekiel to a valley filled with dry bones (v. 1). The prophet is asked, “Son of man, can these bones live” (v. 2-3a)? That’s still a great question! Many churches have failed to preach the Word of God and their membership has dried up! They are similar to Israel—dry bones. Is there any hope for them? Ezekiel’s answer is still just as true today: “O Sovereign Lord, You alone know” (v. 3b). God’s command to Ezekiel is His command to all ministers, “Dry bones, hear the Word of the Lord” (v. 4)! I have enjoyed the privilege of observing what the Word of God can do in the churches of some very discouraged people. His Word will not return void, but will accomplish what it is sent out to do (see Isaiah 55:11). Only His Word can restore the Spirit into the life of a dead church (v. 5-6).

Tuesday, January 10 (read Ezekiel 37:7-10)

So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. (Ezekiel 37:7)

I can only imagine how Ezekiel feels as he watches God’s latest object lesson unfold before his eyes. The bones come together, tendons and flesh appear on them and skin covers them. The dry bones are united, but there is no breath in them (v. 8). Then God commands His servant to prophesy to the breath and say, “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe into these slain, that they may live” (v. 9). Ezekiel complies and breath enters the bones, causing them to stand on their feet as a vast army (v. 10). What does all this mean? As we will see in tomorrow’s devotion, God explains the meaning of this graphic illustration. This is a vital prophecy, not only for the Jewish nation, but also for Christians today.

Wednesday, January 11 (read Ezekiel 37:11-15)

Then He said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.'" (Ezekiel 37:11)

God does not leave it to us to interpret His object lesson! He declares that these bones represent the house of Israel (v. 11). The Jews have given up any hope of victory, but God is not finished with them yet. He prophesies that He will bring the Israelites back to their land (v. 11-12). He did this once when they returned from captivity in Babylon, only to be exiled again by the Romans in 70 A.D. They returned to their land to stay on May 14, 1948 when they became a nation again. Spiritually, they have not come alive yet, but you can be sure it will happen just like He says (v. 13). During the Great Tribulation, He will put His Spirit into the Jewish people and they will know that the One they crucified truly was and is the Son of God (v. 14).

Thursday, January 12 (read Ezekiel 37:15-17)

Join them together into one stick so that they will become one in your hand. (Ezekiel 37:17)

The Lord gives Ezekiel another object lesson to illustrate His point. This time, the prophet is to take a stick of wood and write on it, "Belonging to Judah and the Israelites associated with him." Then he is to take another stick and write on it, "Ephraim's stick, belonging to Joseph and all the house of Israel associated with him" (v. 16). Ever since the death of King Solomon, son of King David, the nation of Israel has been divided into the Northern Kingdom of Ephraim and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, but God will unite the two kingdoms into one during the latter days. We will continue with this lesson in tomorrow's devotion.

Friday, January 13 (read Ezekiel 37:18-23)

"I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms." (Ezekiel 37:22)

Ezekiel will arouse the curiosity of the Jews with his object lesson involving the two sticks of wood (v. 18). In the rest of the chapter, God clarifies this object lesson. The people will come home and become a nation once again. You can check off that part of this prophecy! They will never be divided and have to leave the land again (v. 22; see Jeremiah 31:31-37)! You can trust God to fulfill His Word, regardless of the actions of the nations that hate the Jews. They will believe Jesus is their Savior, and God will put His Spirit in them, just as He has already done with Gentiles (v. 23). No matter what may happen now or in the future, you can relax; God is in control!

Saturday, January 14 (read Ezekiel 37:24-28)

"Then the nations will know that I the Lord make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them forever." (Ezekiel 37:28)

Jesus was born into the tribe of Judah, David's tribe. That is what v. 24 means when it says that David will be shepherd and king over them. It is a reference to David's descendent, Jesus Christ. The Lord will return at the end of the Great Tribulation and will set up a kingdom that will last forever. The first 1000 years will be spent on earth, ruling from the current city of Jerusalem. After that, the New Jerusalem will come down from Heaven and we will live there with Him forever (see Revelation 21:1-7). The world will finally be at peace as Jesus rules from His throne (see Isaiah 26:3). What a Day that will be! I can hardly wait to see my Savior face to face!